



Healthy Worksite Newsletter

January 2013

Healthy Worksite • Healthy Workforce • Healthy Communities

Message from the NHWP Program Director

With the launch of the new year, we are excited to soon announce the employers selected to participate in the National Healthy Worksite Program (NHWP) from the eight communities across the United States. These communities are Kern County, CA, Pierce County, WA, Buchanan County, MO., Marion County, IN, Somerset County, ME, Shelby County, TN, Harris County, TX, and Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, which was added to the program in the summer of 2012. We very much look forward to collaborating with the employers to be chosen and helping them to build a culture of health within their organizations. In addition, we will highlight the work of the NHWP communities and employers as the program proceeds.

On page two of this newsletter, we are pleased to introduce our talented and dedicated team of national and community directors who have been meeting with employers over the past eight months and organizing stakeholders within their respective communities to build excitement for this CDC-funded program. As the program continues, we will continue to highlight each community and share the progress made to reduce the rate of chronic disease and improve the health of employees in the workplace. On page three, we've highlighted Harris County, Texas, and share how community directors Kendra Windisch and Julie Van Dusen are promoting worksite health and best practices for employees to make healthier lifestyle choices.

Fulfilling our promise to provide best practices and strategies on worksite health promotion, I would like to highlight the case study article on page four. What is unique about The Dow Chemical Company's worksite health program is that it has been going strong for 25 years.

Dow's success in establishing and maintaining a culture of health is the result of its comprehensive approach that focuses strongly on prevention. The company's benchmark achievements in worksite health can be attributed to many factors: linking the health of its employees to business goals, making employee health a priority, launching onsite health programs, supporting fitness teams, providing healthy food options and using the science-based findings and recommendations found in [The Guide to Community Preventive Services](#).

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January Webinar Program Planning

January 14, 2013

1–2:30 p.m. EDT

**Webinar
Register Now!**

Mari Ryan, MBA, MHP

Advancing Wellness Certified Worksite
Wellness Program Consultant

Lisa Erck, MS

Massachusetts Department of
Public Health

This webinar will discuss the importance of program planning in a comprehensive approach to worksite health; utilizing data to develop a detailed worksite health plan; how to write objectives that drive effective program implementation; how to set reasonable objectives for behavior change; and the three-year strategic planning process.

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On the Frontline: Meet the NHWP Staff

The NHWP proudly introduces the dedicated team of national and community directors who will work intimately with selected employers to launch and manage their worksite health programs. By providing specialized training and education in the field, their goal is to help selected employers in their respective communities build sustainable worksite health capacity; implement programs, policies and practices to help employees adopt healthier lifestyles and the organization maintain a healthier workforce; increase productivity; and promote peer-to-peer mentoring among employers.



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Community Spotlight: Harris County, Texas

It's clear that America has a big problem—a big weight problem. More than 35 percent of adults across the country are considered obese, with a BMI greater than or equal to 30.¹ They total more than 78 million people.

New [data](#) recently issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently mapped out the percentage of overweight Americans by state, highlighting 12 states that now have very high obesity rates among its adult residents.² In fact, 30.4 percent of Texas residents were considered obese in 2011, making it one of the most obese U.S. states.³ Harris County, Texas, which includes the city of Houston, is the most populous and diverse of the eight communities selected for the CDC's National Healthy Worksite Program, with 82,277 employers and more than 1.5 million employees.

Harris County was chosen based on chronic health issues, need and resources. Ranking 154th out of the state's 233 counties in health factors, Harris County's tobacco-use rate is higher than the state average.⁴ In addition, 23 percent of individuals in the county are physically inactive, which is higher than averages for the state of Texas and the nation.⁵

Kendra Windisch and Julie Van Dusen, National Healthy Worksite Program Community Directors for Harris County, share how many companies have demonstrated excitement and commitment to the program in hopes of creating a healthier, happier workforce. The 15 companies in Harris County will soon begin their journey in building a comprehensive workplace wellness program tailor-made just for them. Their efforts will focus on the prevention of chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease and, of course, obesity.

"Our goal is to change the culture of the companies and help employers to promote worksite health and implement strategies, policies and best practices to make it easier for their employees to make healthier choices," Windisch explained. "This is a great way for companies to improve the health of their employees, but also to improve their bottom line by controlling health-care spending."

"It's great to see companies in the community that are excited about implementing worksite health programs," added Van Dusen. "Meeting with employers in the community, achieving CEO buy-in, understanding their employee population's health issues and setting up stakeholder meetings to launch the rollout are key to increasing visibility of the program. We hope the positive health improvements in the worksites will compel employees to extend their healthy habits to their families."

Click [here](#) for more health statistics on Harris County or [view the interview with Windisch](#) online.

¹ Prevalence of Obesity in the United States, 2009–2010, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief, January 2012, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db82.pdf>

^{2,3,4,5} County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/texas/2012/harris/county/1/overall>



Ask an Expert

What is a comprehensive worksite health program?

Workplace health has expanded over the past decade to encompass the creation of an overall culture of health within the worksite. Designed to support healthy behaviors in the workplace, worksite health promotion enables employees to improve and maintain their health, prevent or control chronic disease and reduce healthcare costs.

The CDC National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion defines a workplace health program as a coordinated and comprehensive set of health promotion and protection strategies implemented at the worksite that includes programs, policies, benefits, environmental supports and links to the surrounding community that are designed to encourage the health and safety of employees.

According to the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (NIOSH), there is increasing evidence that the work environment and the overall health, safety and well-being of workers are strongly connected.

Click [here](#) to learn about the CDC Workplace Health model and [here](#) to learn how NIOSH's Total Worker Health™ program integrates occupational safety and health protection with health promotion.

Success Story: The Dow Chemical Company

Investing in Worksite Wellness and Achieving a Culture of Health

The Dow Chemical Company, the second-largest chemical company in the world, is a provider of plastics, chemicals and agricultural products, serving customers in 160 countries and employing over 52,000 people worldwide.

Dow's passion for innovation inspires and drives its growth strategy. This passion, and Dow's deep knowledge of chemistry, physics and material science, have been the driving forces behind the company's breakthrough technologies and increasing profitability.

In addition to providing innovative solutions for more than 100 years, Dow continues to reinvent itself for the 21st century with a successful culture of health and wellness. With formal health promotion programs in place for 25 years, Dow uses the recommendations from the Community Preventive Services Task Force, found in [The Guide to Community Preventive Services](#), a free online resource for science-based recommendations and findings about what is effective in improving health. Dow has adopted these recommendations to attain a corporate culture of wellness, by addressing chronic disease risk factors such as physical inactivity, obesity and tobacco use among its employees.

Linking the health of its employees directly to its business goals, Dow uses a comprehensive health strategy that includes quality and effectiveness, health system management and advocacy in order to cultivate an environment in which employee health is a priority. Dow's priority on health is reflected in the company's many health initiatives, including onsite health programs, preventive health benefits, supportive fitness teams and nutritious food options.

Dow's success in establishing a culture of health is the result of its comprehensive approach that focuses strongly on prevention, such as planning special events (a Friday 5K), hosting exercise classes on demand and encouraging walking meetings.

In addition, Dow's annual No Tobacco Day urges users to quit using tobacco for at least one day. The program aligns with the Task Force's recommendations to combine worksite incentives and competitions with other tobacco cessation efforts to reduce tobacco use among workers. In the first year of the program, 6 percent of Dow's tobacco users committed to quit and 56 percent met the 24-hour challenge. At six months, 11 percent of surveyed participants remained tobacco free.

"I'm pleased to say that the majority of our employees are engaged in Dow's worksite wellness program," said Dr. Catherine Baase, global director of health services at Dow. "Dow has demonstrated that a comprehensive approach to employee health is not only possible, but can be highly successful."

For more information on Dow's use of the Community Guide, click [here](#).

the NUMBERS

According to Dow Chemical:

- Eighty-five percent of Dow's employees voluntarily participate in health risk assessments.⁶
- Seventy-five percent participate in one or more internal health services each year.⁶
- Between 2004 and 2008, Dow employees reduced their risk of chronic disease by 15 percent.⁶
- Dow saved more than \$100 million in U.S. healthcare costs between 2004 and 2010.⁷

⁶ Dow Family Health. www.dow.com/familyhealth/

⁷ Baase, CM. Principles of integrated health: A path to health care reform. Testimony before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. February 23, 2009. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-111shrg47760/pdf/CHRG-111shrg47760.pdf>.

Dow's commitment to employee health has garnered national recognition for its leadership, innovation and measurable outcomes in corporate health programs. Although these programs are strategic investments in the health of employees, the cost savings are undeniable.

Celebrate Healthy Weight Week January 20–26, 2013

Get a fresh start this coming year! The 20th annual Healthy Weight Week promotes healthy lifestyle habits and helps to prevent weight problems.

Approximately 40 to 45 percent of American adults make one or more New Year's resolutions, with weight loss and exercise being among the top choices. The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is making changes in your eating and physical activity habits that you can keep up for the rest of your life. Even a modest weight loss, such as 5 to 10 percent of your total body weight, is likely to produce health benefits, such as improvements in blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood sugars.⁸

Fresh fruits and vegetables: All fresh fruits and vegetables are great choices, but consider trying something different. How about a pomegranate or pineapple? When your favorite fresh fruits aren't in season, try a frozen or dried variety of a fresh fruit you enjoy. Commit to going to the produce department and trying a new vegetable. You may find that you prefer grilled vegetables to a salad.

Physical activity: Regular physical activity is important for good health, and it's especially important if you're trying to lose weight or to maintain a healthy weight. According to the CDC, physical activity also helps to reduce the risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke and several forms of cancer.

Click [here](#) for great resources to help motivate and support you in your quest to lose weight or maintain your current weight.

⁸ Effect of degree of weight loss on health benefits. Obesity Research 3: 211S-216S. 2 Reference for 10%: NIH, NHLBI Obesity Education Initiative. Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults. Available online: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/ob_gdlns.pdf



Healthy Weight: it's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!

The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight isn't about short-term dietary changes. It's about a lifestyle that includes healthy eating, regular physical activity and balancing the number of calories you consume with the number of calories your body uses.

Assess your weight

The first step is to determine whether or not your current weight is healthy. Body Mass Index (BMI) is one way to measure your weight. Click [here](#) to calculate your BMI.

Lose weight

Healthy weight loss is an ongoing lifestyle that includes long-term changes in daily eating and exercise habits. To lose weight, you must burn more calories than you take in. Since one pound equals 3,500 calories, you need to reduce your caloric intake by 500–1000 calories per day to lose about 1 to 2 pounds per week.⁹

Keeping the weight off

Once you've lost weight, you'll want to learn how to keep it off. Regular physical activity is important for good health, and it's especially important if you're trying to maintain a healthy weight. Click [here](#) to learn more about the common characteristics among people who have successfully lost weight and maintained that loss over time.

⁹ DHHS, AIM for a Healthy Weight, page 5. Available online: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/aim_hwt.pdf

Mental Health and Chronic Disease in the Workforce

Depression—the most common mental health problem in the workplace—affects about one in 10 employees.¹⁰ This problem is a medical condition, that if left untreated or under-treated, can affect individual employees as well as entire businesses. One common finding is that people who suffer from a chronic disease are more likely to also suffer from depression.¹¹

Mental health disorders and chronic diseases can affect anyone, regardless of age, culture, race, ethnicity, gender or income. In 2009, 145 million people—almost half of all Americans—were living with a chronic condition.¹² Approximately 26% of American adults aged 18 years and older suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year.¹³

Click [here](#) to view a recent webinar provided by the CDC that offers a comprehensive overview of mental health and chronic disease in the working population. This webinar focuses on the opportunities and challenges employers are confronting, along with practical actionable guidance and recommendations for employers to use to address this issue.

¹⁰ Fogarty, S. Comorbidity Addressed Effectively via an Integrated Solution. Compensation & Benefits Review, 38(5), 2006.

¹¹ Chapman DP, Perry GS, Strine TW. The vital link between chronic disease and depressive disorders. Prev Chronic Dis [serial online] 2005; 2(1). http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2005/jan/04_0066.htm. Accessed September 20, 2012.

¹² Anderson G. Chronic Care: Making the Case for Ongoing Care. Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2010. <http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/web-assets/2010/01/chronic-care>. Accessed October 4, 2012.

¹³ Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of 12-month DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Arch Gen Psych. 2005;62:617-27.

Be One in a Million Hearts



Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death in the United States and is responsible for 17 percent of national health expenditures.¹⁴ In the past decade, the medical costs of CVD (including stroke) have grown at an average annual rate of 6 percent and account for 15 percent of the increase in U.S. health-care spending.¹⁵

In an effort to reduce the prevalence of heart disease and stroke, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with nonprofit and private organizations, has launched [Million Hearts™](#), a program comprised of evidence-based interventions designed to bring CVD to the forefront of federal health-care policy and prevent one million heart attacks and strokes over the next five years.

By building a healthier life, free of cardiovascular disease and stroke, you can greatly reduce your risk through lifestyle changes and, in some cases, medication. There are steps that each of us can take to reach this goal as a nation. Be one in a Million Hearts™ and see how your actions can make a positive difference.

To reduce the risk of CVD in their employee population, employers can:

EMPOWER their organizations by supporting activities that help employees access high-quality health care, manage their conditions effectively, get active, eat healthy and stay smoke-free.

INCREASE awareness of heart disease and stroke and their risk factors to empower their employees to take control of their heart health.

PROVIDE convenient and simple blood pressure monitoring in the workplace and encourage its use through challenges and contests.

IMPLEMENT smoke-free air policies at worksites to help smokers quit and to protect nonsmokers from the hazardous effects of secondhand smoke exposure.

SUPPORT efforts to reduce sodium and eliminate trans fats in the food supply, including food served or available at worksites.

In the United States, someone has a heart attack every 34 seconds. Each minute, someone in the United States dies from a heart disease-related event.¹⁰

¹⁴ Forecasting the future of cardiovascular disease in the United States: a policy statement from the American Heart Association. Circulation. 2011; 123:933-944.

¹⁵ Lloyd-Jones D, Adams RJ, Brown TM, et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2010 Update. A Report from the American Heart Association Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Subcommittee. Circulation. 2010;121:e1-e170.